

My name is Nicholas Payne from New Milford

Thank you ladies and gentlemen of the committee for this opportunity to testify.

I am testifying in opposition to the \$50K cut to Project Longevity as included in the Governor's proposed budget. I ask you to fully fund the program as it was passed in the FY 2020-2021 biennium budget.

Our daughter Rebecca was shot dead in May 2008 in her Boston apartment by a crack dealer who got the wrong address. She was a senior at Northeastern University studying Athletic Training.

This is why I am very concerned about urban gun violence and have spoken to both Brent Peterkin when he was Statewide Coordinator for the Longevity Project as well as Harold Dimbo and they both stressed the need for stable funding year to year.

Also I remember a comment by Iran Nazario of the Peace Center on the same issue. He said the comment he hears more than most is "will you be there for me bro?". This is referring to those who feel rightly that they have been let down at times and fear being let down again. This is to say a funding cut not only cuts progress for the current year, but can undo the progress made in previous years.

Contrast this is with a cut in a road repair line item, it is regrettable and lead to less repairs in the current year, but will not undo the repairs made in previous years.

I support more funding for gun violence prevention programs, and urge you to fully fund the Office of Policy and Management budget for Project Longevity. Thank you for your consideration.

While fully funding Project Longevity is important, I believe the State also needs to invest more in preventing community gun violence that disproportionately impacts Black and brown communities in Connecticut. That is why I'm also asking you to support a state-level grant-making authority with dedicated funding along the lines proposed by CT Against Gun Violence. It would deliver reliable funding to other types of community-based gun violence prevention programs like those operated by the Compass Youth Collaborative and Hartford Communities that Care in Hartford, the CT Violence Intervention Program in New Haven and StreetSafe in Bridgeport, to name just a few.

According to the Giffords Law Center, gun violence is estimated to directly cost Connecticut taxpayers at least \$90 million annually. Investing more in community-based violence prevention programs would not only save lives and reduce the trauma inflicted on these communities, it would save money for taxpayers.

Again thank you for the opportunity to testify.